

Message Text

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ACTION EB-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CAB-05 CIAE-00 COME-00
DODE-00 DOTE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 FAA-00 L-03 SS-15
IO-14 H-02 PA-02 ICA-20 /092 W
-----094718 140607Z /16

R 122109Z SEP 78
FM AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8613
INFO AMCONSUL MONTREAL

UNCLAS OTTAWA 04439

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: EAIR, CA
SUBJECT: TROUBLES FOR CANADAIR'S CHALLENGER

1. RECENT REPORTS HAVE INDICATED THAT CANADAIR HAS RUN INTO PROBLEMS WITH ITS CHALLENGER AIRCRAFT. UP TO THE FORMAL ROLL-OUT OF THE NEW EXECUTIVE JET IN MAY, TECHNICAL, PRODUCTION AND SALES DEVELOPMENTS HAD BEEN SO GOOD AS TO BE ALMOST UNEQUALED IN THE HISTORY OF MODERN AIRCRAFT PRODUCTION. NOW, HOWEVER, THE FIRST FLIGHT OF THE AIRCRAFT, ORIGINALLY SCHEDULED FOR EARLY JULY, HAS BEEN DEFERRED UNTIL OCTOBER, LEADING TO SPECULATION THAT SALES MAY BE LOST TO COMPETITORS LIKE GRUMMAN UNLESS THE COMPANY CAN GET THE TESTING AND CERTIFICATION OF THE PLANE BACK ON SCHEDULE.

2. TRANSPORT MINISTRY OFFICIALS HAVE POINTED OUT THAT CANADAIR HAD BEEN TOO OPTIMISTIC IN SCHEDULING FIRST TEST FLIGHTS ONLY FOUR WEEKS AFTER ROLL-OUT WHEN FOUR MONTHS WOULD HAVE BEEN MORE REALISTIC AND IN KEEPING WITH INDUSTRY NORMS. COMPANY ENGINEERS SAY THERE IS NO SINGLE MAJOR PROBLEM WITH THE DESIGN BUT ONLY A SERIES OF DIFFICULTIES WHICH STILL HAVE TO BE OVERCOME.

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3. SENIOR OTTAWA CIVIL SERVANTS ARE QUOTED IN PRESS ARTICLES AS BEING VERY CONCERNED. THEY ARE WORRIED THAT CUSTOMERS FOR THE 117 AIRCRAFT ALREADY ON ORDER OR OPTION WILL CHOOSE TO CANCEL THEIR CONTRACTS IF DELAYS STRETCH OUT TOO LONG. WHILE THEY CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THE AIRCRAFT WILL FLY BY LATE OCTOBER AND WILL BE A FINE AIRCRAFT, IT NOW SEEMS IMPOSSIBLE THAT CANADAIR WILL BE ABLE TO MEET

PROMISED DELIVERY DATES IN 1979. ENDERS

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NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: AIRCRAFT, SALES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 12 sep 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: n/a
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment:
Disposition Date: 01 jan 1960
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978OTTAWA04439
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780373-0571
Format: TEL
From: OTTAWA
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780977/aaaac1hk.tel
Line Count: 63
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b2d35b52-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EB
Original Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: n/a
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 29 mar 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: N/A
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 1468215
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: TROUBLES FOR CANADAIR'S CHALLENGER
TAGS: EAIR, CA
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b2d35b52-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014